

## **5.9 Socioeconomics**

### **5.9.1 Introduction**

Both NEPA and CEQA, and the regulations and guidelines that implement these laws, require consideration of social and economic impacts of projects in preparation of environmental documents. NEPA and CEQA policies state that consideration is to be given to qualitative factors and unquantifiable environmental amenities and values, along with economic and technical considerations in decision-making that may affect the environment.

Pursuant to Section 15064(e) of the CEQA Guidelines, economic and social changes resulting from a project shall not be treated as significant effects on the environment. Economic or social changes may be used, however, to determine that a physical change shall be regarded as a significant effect on the environment. Where economic or social effects of a project cause a physical change, the physical change may be regarded as a significant effect in the same manner as any other physical change resulting from the project. Alternatively, economic and social effects of a physical change may be used to determine that the physical change is a significant effect on the environment. If the physical change causes adverse economic or social effects on people, those adverse effects may be used as a factor in determining whether the physical change is significant.

Socioeconomic impacts analyzed in this section include: social or economic use of the surrounding land, displacement of persons or housing, and adverse effects on minority and/or low-income populations.

### **5.9.2 Environmental Setting**

#### ***Socioeconomic Characteristics Of El Dorado County and Project Area***

The project site is located in the west-central area of El Dorado County directly south of the Shingle Springs Rancheria. Approximately 80 percent of the County's 152,942 residents live in the unincorporated areas (California Department of Finance, 2001). This includes approximately 2,643 people living in the nearby town of Shingle Springs. Major residential communities exist in El Dorado Hills, Cameron Park, and to a lesser extent Shingle Springs, in the western part of the County. These residential communities serve as suburban areas to the booming Sacramento metropolitan region. There are two incorporated cities within the County. Placerville, the county seat (population 9,610), is located approximately nine miles east of the project site. South Lake Tahoe (population 23,609), approximately 70 miles east of the project site, is the hub of the Lake Tahoe recreation area. Two major highways, U.S.

50 and State Route 49, intersect the county while State Route 88 establishes the county's southern border with Amador and Alpine Counties.

With regard to ethnicity, approximately 93 % of individuals residing in the project area (Census Tract 309.02) defined categorized themselves as white alone. Approximately 3% identified themselves as American Indian or Alaska Native and nearly 2% identified themselves as Asian. Less one percent identified themselves as other races including African American or Native Hawaiian (US Census Bureau, 2000).

Total population nearly doubled between the 1970 and 1980 census years, then nearly doubled again by the 1990 Census. Population increased by approximately 21% in the last ten years and according to the California Department of Finance, the County's population will increase by approximately 46 to 62 percent in the next ten years. Studies show that 78.2% of the population increases since 1980 are due to the overall growth of the Sacramento region with the majority of the growth in El Dorado County occurring in the El Dorado Hills/Cameron Park area.

The population of the project area, located in Census Tract 309.02, grew at a slightly lesser rate than that of the rest of the county. In 1990, the population for the study area was 3,947 persons, and in 2000 it had risen to 4,367 - a 10.6 % increase. From 1990 – 2000 El Dorado County's population grew by 24.1 %, while the study area population grew by only 10.6 % - a 13.5 % difference.

Tourism is the single most significant component of the regional economy and is likely to remain a dominant employer in the future. This sector accounts for almost one third of the jobs in El Dorado County, mostly related to restaurants, lodging, and recreational activities. El Dorado is among the top twenty counties in California for tourist revenue. Highway 50, itself, which serves the cities of South Lake Tahoe and Placerville and nearby recreation areas, is a large economic asset to the county. Consumers using Highway 50 provide a great deal of economic activity to the region. Most of the region's labor force is composed of retail, office, and medical workers. There is a small sector of the labor force that is seasonal; most of the workers within this sector are employed in the winter (M. Cubed, 2000, El Dorado County Economic Development Department, 2001, El Dorado County Chamber of Commerce, 2001).

The median household income for El Dorado County is \$35,058, while the median income of the project area (Census Tract 309.02) is \$48,531. The median household income for the nation is \$41,349 (Census 2000). Clearly, residents of the study area have higher incomes than residents of the region and the nation.

### **Socioeconomic Characteristics Of The Shingle Springs Rancheria**

According to Tribal Data Resources, the Shingle Springs Rancheria has an enrollment of 334 individuals, although only 18 live on the Rancheria property. As expected, Native Americans dominate the ethnic make up of the Rancheria community. **Table 5.9-1** contains an overview of the population and ethnic characteristics of the community. The general membership resides in 180 households living on and off of the reservation. According to the 2000 Census, there are sixteen housing units on the Rancheria property.

**Table 5.9-1 Shingle Springs Rancheria Community Population**

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Percent of Community</b>
Native American / Alaskan	272	81.4.
Other	53	15.9.
White	7	2.1
Black	1	0.3.
Hispanic	1	0.3
Asian	0	0.
Total Individuals	334	100

Source: Tribal Data Resources, Shingle Springs Rancheria Tribal Demographics Summary, 1999.  
U.S. Census Bureau, 2001.

The median income of the Shingle Springs Rancheria is considerably lower than that of El Dorado County. **Table 5.9-2** displays the median income distribution of the Rancheria. As shown in the table, 145 or 81 percent earned less than 80 percent of the county's median household income in 1997. Further emphasizing the low economic status of the community, 117 households, or 65 percent, earn less than half of the county median income. No employment currently exists on the Rancheria due to the restricted access.

**Table 5.9-2 Household Income As Percent Of Median County Income**

<b>Level</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>Households</b>	<b>Percent</b>
More than 120 %	> \$46,650	13	13
80% to 120%	\$31,100 - \$46,650	22	12.2
50% to 80%	\$19,440 - \$31,100	28	15.6
30% to 50%	\$11,660 - \$19,440	50	27.8
Less than 30%	< \$11,660	67	37.2
Total Households		180	100.0

Source: Tribal Data Resources, Shingle Springs Rancheria Tribal Demographics Summary, 1999

Members of the Shingle Springs Band generally reside at a standard of living well below that of the other residents of the county. Of the tribal members, 174 or 62% live within the Rancheria's service area. Seventy-nine are employed; however, they tend to be employed in low-wage jobs. Twenty-two, or one-quarter of the labor force, earn less than \$9,840 per year, which is the poverty level. Another 10 residents, or 11% of the labor force, are unemployed. By comparison, the unemployment rate in El Dorado County was 3.9% for November 2000 (California Employment Development Department, 2001).

### **5.9.3 Regulatory Setting**

On February 11, 1994, President Clinton signed *Executive Order 12898, Federal Action to Address Environmental Justice in Minority and Low-Income Populations*. This order requires each federal agency to administer and implement programs, policies, and activities that affect human health or the environment so as to identify and avoid “disproportionately high and adverse” effects on minority and low-income populations. In accordance with Executive Order 12898, this section identifies where minority and low-income populations reside, identifies public participation efforts to date, and analyzes project impacts related to low and moderate-income persons and minority persons. One means of determining poverty levels is median income. Eighty percent of median county income is used by Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and other federal agencies to define low-income. Fifty percent of median is considered very-low income. Income limits, adjusted for household size, are published annually by HUD for federal affordable housing programs. The statutory basis for HUD’s income limit policies is Section 3 of the U.S. Housing Act of 1937, as amended. These policies have been embraced by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), which administers income-restricted grant programs for small cities and counties like El Dorado. Minority neighborhoods are those defined by Census Tracts or Block Groups that have higher concentrations (10 percent or more) of minority (or non-white) persons than the County overall.

### **5.9.4 Impacts And Mitigation Measures**

#### ***Significance Criteria***

In an effort to define “significant” impacts, the concept of “thresholds of significance” has evolved. Such thresholds can be devised when dealing with air, water, and other health-based standards. Unfortunately, such standards do not exist in the social sciences (i.e. community analysis). For the purposes of this analysis, potential project impacts are considered significant if they would:

- present barriers to continued existing or planned land uses, deprive neighboring property owners of social or economic use of their land, fundamentally change the character of a neighborhood; or
- result in involuntary displacement of persons or housing or require relocation pursuant to the property acquisition and relocation standards of the State of California, the Caltrans Relocation Assistance Program or the Federal Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970; or
- disproportionately and adversely affect minority and/or low-income populations, including effects on housing and business development and effects related to post construction conditions (e.g. environmental health, noise, and air quality conditions); or
- physically divide an established neighborhood, present barriers or access limitations that would impede planned residential growth or other uses of land, or disrupt neighborhood cohesion.

### **Methodology**

Potential impacts of the project alternatives on the surrounding community were analyzed with regards to the significance criteria.

### **Impact/ Mitigation**

#### **Impact      5.9-1 Socioeconomic Character Of Surrounding Area**

AA      Under the No Project/Action Alternative, the interchange would not be constructed; therefore, the hotel/casino complex would not be constructed. **No impact** would occur under the No Project/Action Alternative.

AB, AC      The project area is characterized by rural residential land uses and relatively large parcel sizes. The project would not result in the removal of businesses or represent a substantial impairment to the economic viability of an existing commercial district. There are no businesses within the project area as defined in Chapter 5.0. The project would not impede planned economic growth, as there are no planned commercial land uses locally, and regional plans for economic growth would be determined by El Dorado County. **The Construction of an interchange at the project site will not result in a significant impact to the socioeconomic character of the surrounding area.**

**Mitigation 5.9-1 Socioeconomic Character Of Surrounding Area**

None Required.

**Impact 5.9-2 Displacement Of Persons Or Housing**

AA Under the No Project/Action Alternative, the interchange would not be constructed; therefore, the hotel/casino complex would not be constructed.  
***The No Project/Action Alternative will not result in a significant impact to the surrounding community with regards to the displacement of persons or housing.***

AB, AC Both design alternatives would be constructed within existing Caltrans right-of-way (ROW) and a five-acre parcel connecting the Shingle Springs Rancheria to Highway 50. The existing residence on the 5-acre parcel is owned by the Rancheria and is currently occupied by a Tribal member. The tribal member will move back into a residence on the Rancheria once construction begins.

The access road would cross under Artesia Road that currently provides access to two residential parcels east of the proposed roadway. The undercrossing will assure that access to the two residential parcels is maintained. ***The Flyover Interchange Design Alternative and Diamond Interchange Design Alternative are not expected to result in a significant impact to the surrounding community with regards to the displacement of persons or housing.***

**Mitigation 5.9-2 Displacement Of Persons Or Housing**

None Required.

**Impact 5.9-3 Minority And/Or Low-Income Populations**

AA Under the No Project/Action Alternative, the interchange would not be constructed. The impact associated with minority and/or low-income populations is related to the lack of an ability to construct commercial generating uses on the Rancheria. This effect is considered an indirect effect that is discussed within Chapter 9 of this EIR/EA. For purposes of this

analysis, there are no direct effects of not constructing the proposed interchange. ***The No Project/Action Alternative will not result in a significant impact to minority and/or low-income populations.***

AB, AC There are two potentially affected neighborhoods or residential subdivisions adjacent to the Shingle Springs Rancheria within the study area. Those neighborhoods are “Grassy Run” to the northeast and “Buckeye Rancheros” to the west/southwest of the Rancheria. However, as mentioned above, the median income of the project area is above that of the nation, and there are few minorities living in the project area. The only low-income and minority population that has been identified is the Shingle Springs Rancheria community, which will directly benefit from improved emergency and commercial access. ***The Flyover Interchange Design Alternative and Diamond Interchange Design Alternative are not expected to result in a significant impact to minority and/or low-income populations.***

**Mitigation 5.9-3 Minority And/Or Low-Income Populations**

None Required.

**Impact 5.9-4 Neighborhood Impacts**

AA Under the No Project/Action Alternative, the interchange would not be constructed. There would be no impacts to surrounding neighborhoods. ***The No Project/Action Alternative will not result in a significant impact to surrounding neighborhoods.***

AB, AC There are two potentially affected neighborhoods or residential subdivisions adjacent to the Shingle Springs Rancheria within the study area. Those neighborhoods are “Grassy Run” to the northeast and “Buckeye Rancheros” to the west/southwest of the Rancheria. However, neither alternative design of the proposed interchange would physically divide these neighborhoods, present barriers or access limitations that would impede planned residential growth or other uses of land, or disrupt community cohesion. ***The Flyover Interchange Design Alternative and Diamond Interchange Design Alternative are not expected to result in a significant impact to surrounding neighborhoods.***

**Mitigation 5.9-4 Neighborhood Impacts**

None Required.

**Impact 5.9-5 Cumulative Socio-Economic Impacts**

AA Under the No Project/Action Alternative, the interchange would not be constructed. The lack of an interchange to the Rancheria will result in the inability to develop revenue generating uses and provide adequate ingress/egress from the Rancheria. However, this is treated as an indirect effect within Chapter 9 of this EIR/EA. ***The No Project/Action Alternative will not contribute to cumulative socioeconomic effects.***

AB, AC The interchange alternatives will not contribute to significant cumulative effects associated with the displacement of persons or housing. As discussed in Impacts 5.9-2, there is only one house that will be affected. This house is currently owned and occupied by Tribal members. This project, considered together with cumulative growth, will not result in cumulative displacement of people or housing. The same is true for the socioeconomic character of the surrounding area. The proposed interchange will not prevent people from accessing their properties. Since there are no transportation related cumulative development projects to consider for the project area, no cumulative effects will be experienced. The increased traffic along the roadway network, resulting from cumulative growth, will not prevent the use of adjacent property. Lastly, the proposed interchange will not result in a cumulative effect to minority and/or low income populations. ***The Flyover Interchange Design Alternative and Diamond Interchange Design Alternative are not expected to result in a significant cumulative socioeconomic impact.***

**Mitigation 5.9-5 Cumulative Socio-Economic Impacts**

None Required.